

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJ: FRENCH EEC COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS ON CGT AND ETUC

REFS: (A) PARIS 6021 (NOTAL); (B) BRUSSELS 3068; (C)
77 BRUSSELS 7530; (D) ECA-110, MAR. 14, 1977

1. THE SECRETARIAT OF EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
(ETUC) HAS JUST RECEIVED A COPY OF THE FEBRUARY 21 LE
MATIN ARTICLE QUOTING EC COMMISSIONER CLAUDE CHEYSSON'S
VIEWS ON WHAT INITIATIVES A POSSIBLE FUTURE FRENCH
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GOVERNMENT OF THE LEFT MIGHT TAKE IN THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITY. AN ETUC SOURCE TOLD US FEBRUARY 28 THAT
ETUC GENERAL SECRETARY MATHIAS HINTERSCHIED AND OTHER
ETUC LEADERS HAVE HAD "STRONG NEGATIVE REACTIONS" TO
CHEYSSON'S STATEMENTS ON CGT ENTRY INTO THE ETUC, AND
THAT THESE REACTIONS WILL BE CONVEYED TO CHEYSSON.

2. WHAT IRRITATES THESE ETUC LEADERS, WE ARE TOLD, IS NOT THAT CHEYSSON FAVORS CGT MEMBERSHIP IN THE ETUC (SO DO MANY ETUC LEADERS), BUT THAT HE SEEMED TO BE SAYING A LEFTIST FRENCH GOVERNMENT WOULD ASSURE SUCH MEMBERSHIP. AN ETUC OFFICIAL POSED A RHETORICAL QUESTION TO USEC LABOR ATTACHE: "DOES CHEYSSON THINK THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WILL DETERMINE THE POLICIES OF OUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE? THAT'S ABSURD."

3. ETUC'S REACTION TO THIS LATEST CHEYSSON STATEMENT IS HEIGHTENED BECAUSE OF EARLIER (UNPUBLICIZED) PRESSURE FROM CHEYSSON THAT THE CGT BE INCLUDED ON THE BOARD OF THE NEWLY FOUNDED EUROPEAN TRADE UNION INSTITUTE, WHICH IS PARTIALLY FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. HINTERSCHIED, HOWEVER, HAS MADE CLEAR THAT THE INSTITUTE, A RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION SERVICE, WILL BE OPEN ONLY TO UNIONS WITHIN THE ETUC (REFTEL B, PARA 7).

4. COMMENT: IN HIS PRO-CGT EFFORTS CHEYSSON IS ACTING MORE AS A SENIOR FRENCH SOCIALIST THAN AS AN EC COMMISSIONER (HIS DOSSIER IS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO LDC'S, NOT EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS). IN ONE VIEW WIDELY HELD HERE, CHEYSSON IS COUNTING ON A FRENCH LEFT VICTORY IN MARCH, AND IS POLITICKING NOT ONLY TO PROMOTE SUCH A VICTORY BUT ALSO TO TRY TO ASSURE HIMSELF A HIGH PLACE IN A LEFT GOVERNMENT IN PARIS.
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5. ALTHOUGH CHEYSSON PERHAPS WENT TOO FAR IN THE LE MATIN INTERVIEW IN DISCUSSING A FRENCH LEFTIST GOVERNMENT'S POTENTIAL INFLUENCE ON THE ETUC, HIS SUPPORT FOR THE COMMUNITY'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE CGT IS CONSISTENT WITH TRADITIONAL FRENCH GOVERNMENT POLICY IN THE EC. AT THE GOF'S INSISTENCE, THE EC COUNCIL'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND THE COMMUNITY'S ANNUAL TRIPARTITE (LABOR-MANAGEMENT-GOVERNMENT) CONFERENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, BOTH INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES NOT ONLY FROM ETUC AFFILIATES BUT ALSO FROM THE FRENCH CGT AND CFTC (REF C).

6. IN ITS DAY-TO-DAY CONSULTATIONS, THE EC COMMISSION GENERALLY DEALS ONLY WITH EUROPEAN-LEVEL ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS THE ETUC (REF D). WHY, THEN, ARE THE CGT AND CFTC ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN BIG MEETINGS? BECAUSE IF THEY WERE EXCLUDED, ACCORDING TO ETUC AND COMMISSION SOURCES, THE MEETINGS WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE, SINCE THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WOULD VETO THEM.

7. IN ANY CASE, CHEYSSON'S RECENT COMMENTS DO NOT IN AND OF THEMSELVES HELP OPEN THE ETUC'S DOORS TO THE CGT.

NOR WOULD A FRENCH LEFT VICTORY NECESSARILY SWING THOSE
DOORS OPEN. THE CHIEF OBSTACLE TO THE CGT'S ENTRY HAS
BEEN THE STEADFAST OPPOSITION OF THE GERMAN DGB, AND
ACCORDING TO A DGB SOURCE HERE, THAT OPPOSITION WILL
REMAIN SOLID, WHATEVER HAPPENS IN THE FRENCH ELECTIONS.
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